



BARNARD CASTLE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

R E P O R T

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year

1940.

R.C.F. Smith M.D., B.S., D.P.H.,
F.R.I.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health.
Medical Superintendent of
Isolation Hospital.
School Medical Officer.

Mr.Chairman and Gentlemen,

I hereby present my report for the year 1940, a year, owing to the War, of vastly increased legislature and A.R.P.duties with resulting heavy calls upon the personnel of all health and administrative services as well as the general public.

Again, owing to the necessity for strict economy, the Ministry of Health has advised curtailment of all reports, hence only a skeleton outline of essential and urgent matters appertaining to public health will be mentioned.

As before the Report Centre at the Rural Office, has been manned by at least thirty four volunteers, both day and night, a minimum of four being always present. The purpose of this is that should an air-raïd occur, messages would be received from Wardens at outposts with the result that the staff at the centre would at once initiate the proper measures for civil defence.

It has been unfortunate for A.R.P. workers that the last two War winters have been so severe. Volunteers, from both town and Rural areas deserve our highest praise in the fact that they have conscientiously and promptly attended to their allotted tasks in order to perform any work that an emergency might require. When we recollect the fact that most of these volunteers have their own livelihood to make, our praise cannot be too fulsome. It is a matter of regret however, that in this town, there are young able bodied, healthy females without any special ties, who are so lacking in patriotism and moral sense that they are willing for others to share their burdens and do nothing, in any way whatever, to assist in this most important branch of civil defence work.

As before, we have in the combined areas, an army of A.R.P.workers 1,000 strong, who, we are proud to know, are giving many hours of their spare time without monetary reward.

All constructive policy is still in abeyance.

Reginald G.F.Smith, M.D.,
Medical Officer of Health.

A Synopsis of chief changes and events during 1940.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The retable value has increased by £109 on the previous year.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

After the outbreak of War, a branch of the Laboratory Service of King's College, Newcastle on Tyne was moved to Barnard Castle School. The purpose of this is to assist in the prevention and control of Infectious Diseases occurring among troops, evacuees and civilians. It has proved its worth on many occasions for quick diagnosis and hence prompt treatment.

SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICES.

Following upon the out-break of War, Clinics were opened at Barnard Castle, Butterknowle and Evenwood. These are attended to by your Medical Officer of Health. They have proved their worth over and over again. Dozens of cases of scabies, minor skin disorders and other diseases of a more serious type, have been successfully treated at these clinics.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Up to the moment there have been but a few cases of infectious diseases in the whole of the community. Scarlet Fever, which for years had been excessive, began to decline two years ago and has continued to do so. There were only 23 cases. Diphtheria also showed a satisfactory decline. The incidence of Measles, Whooping Cough, Tuberculosis and other infectious diseases was below the average. At the instigation of the Ministry of Health, a Diphtheria Immunisation scheme was brought into being in the Spring. The steps taken were: Consent slips were given to all school children; sanction for the above obtained from the Education Committee; handbills and posters exhibited; slides shown in the cinemas; local doctors informed and their consent to perform the work at an agreed scale of payment obtained; Consent forms were collected. particulars extracted and lists made up for the local doctors to perform the work. The serum was provided free by the Ministry of Health. Two injections was given to each consenting child from the age of 9 months to 15 years. The result was most gratifying. Some 76% of the child population being immunised and thus giving them 98% protection against Diphtheria. Thanks are due to the School Teachers for their assistance in this scheme.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

There was nothing outstanding in the numbers in both categories. The Death Rate of Infants is still pursuing a satisfactory decline.

WATER SUPPLIES.

All piped supplies are examined by Bacteriological methods at regular intervals. There have been no adverse reports. Examination is necessary in case any water borne disease is brought into the district by troops and evacuees.

SLAUGHTERING.

Barnard Castle is still the centre for the district for the slaughtering of cattle, sheep and pigs, the

most of which is intended for home consumption. All meat slaughtered and the premises are regularly inspected by your Officials. Since the inception of this method of slaughtering, the premises have been greatly improved as to the general cleanliness and the work is now carried out without the danger of causing meat to become unwholesome.

FOOT LOCKERS.

Owing to the black-out regulations with consequential closure of air exits together with the increasing number of troops and evacuees, made the condition of air in these buildings overheated, foul and germ laden and therefore a potential means of spreading colds, coughs, influenza and other diseases. Suitable extractor fans have been erected and there is no cause for complaint.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

There is nothing untoward to report in this connection. A case of Abortus Fever was traced to a cow carrying the particular germ in the Milk. Suitable steps were taken and no further cases occurred.

A.R.P.

During the year your officials continued with the training in First Aid, Anti-gas, Report Centre Administration and other branches of A.R.P. Volunteers and others who required refresher courses. This army consists of Wardens, First Aid Parties, Ambulance Drivers and Attendants, personnel of the First Aid Post, Administrators of the Report Centre, Decontamination Squads, Car Drivers and others. Collective and individual training were given to all. Owing to the call up for Military Service there has been a progressive depletion of Male Volunteers, hence there are vacancies for males in most of the above services. As time goes on this position will become more acute unless we obtain more female volunteers.